



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DIVISION OF SOLID WASTE & RECYCLING

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News Release

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Frederick County Divisions Team Up to Tame Lithium-Ion Batteries

Frederick, Md. – Fires caused by damaged or faulty lithium-ion batteries are becoming more common. These batteries can be dangerous in our homes, workplaces, and waste stream. To combat this growing hazard and in recognition of Fire Prevention Month and National Recycling Month in November, the Divisions of Fire and Rescue Services (DFRS) and Solid Waste and Recycling (DSWR) are teaming up to help people in Frederick County become Lithium-Ion (Li-Ion) Battery Tamers.

The partnership will provide information and resources on safer ways to handle and dispose of lithium-ion batteries, including:

- Special events to dispose of lithium-ion batteries, including the DFRS Open House and DSWR Household Hazardous Waste Events October 10.
- Introduction of the “Battery Brigade,” a team of specially trained hazardous material handlers and educators from both divisions.
- Free, appointment-based curbside pickup of lithium-ion batteries and small electronics such as cell phones, laptops, and tablets.
- Social media posts and educational content about proper battery disposal, safe handling tips, and when to call 9-1-1 if a battery is hot or showing other signs of danger.
- Special storage kits to safely store batteries until they can be dropped off at proper disposal locations.
- A public service announcement shown throughout October at Warehouse Cinemas before every movie.

“This partnership between divisions recognizes that the public needs better solutions for battery disposal than throwing batteries in the trash or recycling. That practice has contributed to a reported 5,000 battery fires in our waste stream, some of which have put our team, equipment and infrastructure at risk,” said Lee Zimmerman, Director of the Division of Solid Waste and Recycling.

Most lithium-ion batteries are safe when used properly. However, they can become damaged or unstable over time. When this happens, materials inside the battery can react

and generate intense heat, an event called “thermal runaway.” The battery can then catch fire, creating a serious risk in homes, garages, and other buildings.

This danger increases when batteries are thrown away in the trash or placed in recycling. Once a battery enters the waste stream, it can be crushed or damaged, causing it to overheat and start a fire. Although these fires are often brought under control quickly, they can damage transfer trailers, trucks, and personal property.

“A damaged battery can start a fire fast—in your home, your car, or even the trash truck that picks up your garbage,” added Fire Chief Tom Coe. “That’s why we’re teaming up to help. Together, we can keep our families, our firefighters, and our neighborhoods safe.”

To learn more or sign up for curbside lithium-ion pick up, visit www.FrederickCountyMd.gov/BeALionTamer and follow the Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services (@FCDFRS) and the Division of Solid Waste and Recycling (@FrederickReycles) on Facebook and Instagram.

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